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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

Friday, August 12, 2005
HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
Diyarbakir Prepares for Erdogan Visit - Vatan
DEHAP Mayors Call on PKK to Leave Arms - Vatan
PKK Suspends Attacks During Erdogan's Diyarbakir Visit -
Aksam
Israel Lifts Antalya Travel Warning - Hurriyet
Israel Grateful to Turkey for Recent Security Operations -
Milliyet
London to Deport al-Qaida Spiritual Leader Katada - Milliyet
New Signs of Division in Iraq - Vatan
New Constitution Hints at Farewell to a Unitary Iraq -
Milliyet
Al-Hakim Wants Federal Shiite Zone in South of Iraq - Sabah
50,000 Israelis Protest Gaza Pullout in Tel Aviv - Sabah
2 Turkish Troops Killed in PKK Ambush - Hurriyet

OPINION MAKERS
Turkish Police Deal Heavy Blow Against al-Qaida - Cumhuriyet
Diyarbakir Hopeful on Eve of Erdogan Visit - Radikal
US Warplanes Strike Civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan - Yeni
Safak
Iran Rejects Last Call from Vienna on Nuclear Program -
Zaman
Iran Warns EU, US Against 'Miscalculations' - Cumhuriyet
Bush Says US Visa to be Granted to Ahmedinajad - Radikal
Oil Prices Set New Record: 66 USD - Zaman
33 Million Children Hunger-Stricken in Africa - Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

Al-Qaida's Syrian Members Arrested in Turkey: A suspected Syrian al-Qaida militant, Luia Sakra, appeared before a court in Istanbul Thursday to face charges of supplying and manufacturing the bombs used in the attacks against British and Jewish targets in Istanbul in November 2003. Sakra is believed to have received the order to stage the Istanbul bombings from Abu Musa al-Zarqawi. Sakra was caught in Diyarbakir yesterday and brought to Istanbul. Sakra shouted to reporters from a courthouse window that he had been planning to attack Israeli cruise liners. 'I have no regrets, I was going to attack Israeli ships. Turks would not have been harmed -- only the Israelis,' he shouted in Turkish with an Arabic accent. Sakra is believed to have been al-Qaida's leading figure in Turkey. The lawyer for Sakra, Osman Karahan, acknowledged that his client had been preparing to stage attacks against cruise ships carrying Israeli tourists. '750 kg of explosives were seized in the Antalya raid. My client was planning to attack Israeli ships in international waters with these explosives,' Karahan said, adding that Sakra had purchased a small yacht to carry out the attack. 'Hurriyet' claims that Sakra acknowledged during his interrogation that he had been among a group of insurgents in Iraq who were responsible for the beheading of several Turks working for coalition forces. 'Milliyet' reports that Sakra claimed he killed 10 US troops in Fallujah. 'Vatan' reports that Sakra said there were nine other terrorists in Turkey preparing for attacks.

Hamid Obysi, another Syrian national, was also detained as part of the same operation and is charged with being a courier for al-Qaida. Obysi was brought to Istanbul and arrested after being detained while attempting to flee to Syria. Meanwhile, a travel warning urging Israeli citizens to avoid Mediterranean Turkish resorts was lifted after successful operations by the Turkish security against al-Qaida terrorists, Israeli security sources said late Thursday. A statement from Israel's counter-terrorism center said that the threat level had dropped thanks to the efforts of Turkish security forces. However, Israel still urged its nationals to be cautious in visiting the region.

The Israeli Ambassador in Ankara, Pinhas Avivi, lauded Turkish security operations against terrorists, adding that he was grateful to the Turks for saving the lives of thousands of Israelis. More than 300,000 Israelis visit Turkey each year for holidays.

On Friday, Turkish Security Department Spokesman Ramazan Er said that Sakra and Obysi had been planning to flee to a neighboring European country after staging their attacks in Turkey. 'I don't want to name that country, but we gave the necessary intelligence to them,' Er said. He noted that the intelligence gathered was shared by some friendly countries, adding that operations were carried out solely by Turkish security forces. Er said that the Turkish police continue to search for some suspects including Habib Aktas, Gurcan Bac, and Azat Ekinci in connection with the Istanbul bombings in 2003.

Syria: Sakra Won't Affect Syria-Turkey Ties: The Syrian Information Ministry said on Thursday that the capture of a Syrian national terrorist suspect in Turkey, Luia Sakra, will not affect bilateral ties between the two countries. 'Syria deems Turkey's security to be very important. Syria and Turkey maintain a high level of cooperation through bilateral agreements on security matters,' a Syrian Foreign Ministry official said.

US Citizen With al-Qaida Ties Working at Iraqi Embassy: "Sabah" cites a "Newsweek" report claiming that an Iraqi-US citizen, Tarik Hamid, is working at the Iraqi embassy in Ankara. Hamid allegedly took batteries for satellite phones to bin-Ladin in Afghanistan in 1998. "Newsweek" claimed there is an outstanding federal indictment against Hamid.

Erdogan Due in Diyarbakir: Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan's meeting with activists and intellectuals on the Kurdish question on Wednesday has reversed the atmosphere in Diyarbakir, dailies claim, noting that people in the mainly Kurdish city of Diyarbakir had been encouraged by the PM's remarks in which he acknowledged a 'Kurdish problem.' Erdogan also stressed that further democratization is the sole remedy for the problems in the region. Mayors of 57 municipalities in Turkey's east and southeast Turkey governed by pro-Kurdish DEHAP called on the PKK to end its armed fight against the Turkish state 'unconditionally.' In a joint press statement, the DEHAP mayors welcomed statements by the PM suggesting that the Kurdish question would be solved without making compromises on democratization. Osman Baydemir, the mayor of Diyarbakir, said on behalf of the other mayors that the Turkish Republic had been founded by the grandfathers of all, and that everyone should learn to live together. Baydemir said the growing uncertainties over Turkey's EU accession and the rising armed conflict in the southeast placed responsibilities on politicians, NGOs, and civilians in Turkey. He stressed that the region is largely underdeveloped, but said it would be wrong to see the problem purely as a matter of security and economic development. The PKK said yesterday that it will not stage attacks during the stay of the PM in Diyarbakir. Kurdish activist Leyla Zana and other former Kurdish parliamentarians also welcomed Wednesday's statement by Erdogan, describing it as 'courageous, necessary and important.' The former MPs said Erdogan's remarks were a departure from Turkey's traditional state policies. An EU ambassador in Ankara said Europe expected Erdogan to announce a fresh package of measures to develop the region and end terrorism. The main opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal lashed out at Erdogan for engaging in a 'political flirt' which may damage Turkey's struggle against terrorism. 'The AKP government cannot see the political project behind terrorism, which lays out demands that go beyond a mere recognition of identity,' Baykal said. He argued that changes which are to be made under the pretext of 'democratization' will result in a partition of Turkey. 'Iraq is an example of this,' Baykal said. The northern Iraq Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) representative in Ankara, Bahros Galali, said the PUK is ready to provide full support to the process pledged by Erdogan.

Survey on Social and Economic Conditions in Diyarbakir: According to a survey carried out by the municipality, chambers of trade, and NGOs in Diyarbakir, 55 percent of the 1,362,708 residents in the city are unemployed, "Hurriyet" reports. The absolute poverty rate stands at 39.7 percent. 207,249 citizens applied to the governor's office to receive food aid in 2003. The literacy rate is 69.57 percent, and university graduates make up just 5.6 percent of the population. The literacy rate among Diyarbakir women is 55.37 percent, but 42.38 of women in the city have received no education. Only 38.60 percent of girls are allowed to attend school, far below the overall rate of 68.10 in Turkey. 15,000 children between the ages of 7-15 work on the streets. 23 percent of them are not attending school, and 43 percent are drug addicts. 68.6 percent of pregnant women do not go to hospital for delivery. 0.57 percent of

babies in Diyarbakyr die at birth, higher than the average figure of 0.43 percent for Turkey. 41.90 percent of the buildings in the city are illegally constructed. There are 80,000 people living in shantytowns on the outskirts of Diyarbakir. The province's per capita income is 1,313 USD, making Diyarbakyr 54th among Turkey's 80 provinces.

Ereli on US, Turkey, Iraq Security Talks, PKK: US State Department Spokesman Adam Ereli said that the three-party security talks among the US, Turkey, and Iraq in Washington were 'very productive' discussions aimed at combating terrorism. A particular focus of the discussions was the PKK and its affiliates, and how we could all cooperate to eliminate the terrorist threat to Turkey from northern Iraq,' Ereli emphasized. Ereli noted that two US army commanders would travel to Ankara soon to discuss military tactics for fighting the PKK. Ereli also said that the US, Turkey, and Iraq had agreed to set up working groups for further technical discussions.

US Seeks Breakaway Arab Republic in Iran: The US has prepared war plans to break off the oil-rich province of Kuzistan from Iran, "Hurriyet" reports from Washington. According to the report, which is based on 'intelligence sources,' the US will first heavily bomb Iranian nuclear facilities. US military operations will be supported by the People's Mujahedin organization in Iran. Kuzistan, a province with a majority of Shiite Arabs, will be declared the 'Ahvaz Democratic Arab Republic' following the initial military operation. The US is also busy making plans to incite a revolt of Azeris and other minority groups in Iran, according to the report.

Iraqi Journalists Visit Turkey: A delegation of Iraqi journalists visited the Turkish Journalists Association (TGC) in Istanbul yesterday as the guests of the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) and the Directorate General of Press and Information (BYEGM), papers report. The head of the 21-member of Iraqi delegation, Azad Muhamed Ali, said that there had been no press freedom during the former Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. 'The Saddam Hussein regime meant terror, restriction of freedoms, mass killings, and total destruction of some villages and towns,' Ali stressed. A woman Iraqi TV journalist, 'Ms. Suzan' said that there had been no occupation of Iraq. 'Americans, the British, and troops from other coalition countries came to Iraq to establish of security. They will leave when peace is established. Iraq has attained its position today with the help of those you define as occupiers,' she said. The director of Kirkuk TV, 'Mr. Arif' said there no security problem whatsoever in Erbil, Suleymaniye, and Dohuk. Arif noted that press freedom in Iraq today has increased drastically compared to the times of Saddam Hussein. 'Previously, there was not a single independent paper in Iraq. Today, there are hundreds. We can write any news in any way we like,' Arif said. The Iraqi journalists will call on several newspapers and broadcasters for professional consultations over the weekend.

Turkish Troops Killed in PKK Ambush: Two Turkish troops were killed and four wounded on early Thursday when PKK separatists opened fire on their convoy in eastern Turkey, a military official said. The soldiers were ambushed outside Turkey's eastern city of Tunceli. Meanwhile, police detained two suspected PKK members who were reportedly preparing to launch terrorist attacks in Turkey's Aegean port city of Izmir. Police seized 800 grams of plastic explosives and materials used in bomb-making at the suspects' house.

Turkey to Buy 52 Aircraft: Turkey's Defense Industry Undersecretariat is to put forward an international tender in December for the purchase of 32 military helicopters and 20 planes to fight forest fires. The total package will be worth around 700 million USD, "Sabah" reports. Officials expect the US Sikorsky S-70 Blackhawk and the French NH90 helicopter to be the top contenders in the bid.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iran, Turkey-US Relations/PKK

"A Dangerous Standoff with Iran"
Sami Kohen opined in the mainstream daily "Milliyet" (8/12): "It is rather worrying to see Iran, despite the pressure of the international community, is continuing its nuclear program and is restarting the activities of the conversion plant in Isfahan. The EU-3 efforts to get Iran to comply with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) demands have proven to be fruitless. Despite all of these efforts, Iran's decision has increased the tension in the region. From the beginning, Iran has claimed that its goal in enriching uranium is to establish a new energy source. Since Iran signed the nonproliferation agreement with 187 other countries, it has a right to enjoy the benefits of nuclear energy. However, Iran's political record and its recent attitude have convinced everyone that the real goal

of its enrichment program is to produce nuclear weapons. Led by the US, the EU, and Russia, the international community has increased the pressure on Iran to halt its nuclear activities. Tehran has so far resisted these demands. Most recently, the new Iraqi President rejected the offer of the EU-3 for economic and social benefits in return for relinquishing the enrichment program. As a result, Iran and the international community have found themselves in a dangerous confrontation. If Iran doesn't stop its nuclear program soon, the issue will be taken to the UN Security Council. The US might request that economic and political sanctions be imposed against Iran. But it is expected that China and Russia will not support these demands in the Security Council. Such demands could cause Iran to seek revenge. If Iran increases oil prices, for example, economic crises could be triggered around the world. In short, any conflict stemming from Iran's nuclear adventure could have serious consequences for everyone. Before the crisis grows even bigger, the international community should make every effort to achieve a solution based on common sense."

"In the Eyes of the Americans"

Emin Pazarci wrote in the conservative-sensational "Dunden Bugune Tercuman" (8/12): "The biggest problem between Turkey and the US is the PKK issue. Turkey is bothered by the PKK presence in Northern Iraq, and emphasizes its expectations from the US on this issue at every opportunity. The Turkish people have reacted against the US stance on the PKK while the world is trying to coordinate efforts in the war against terrorism. What is the Americans' opinion on this issue? I had lunch with a high-level US official the other day and talked about the PKK extensively. The official described the PKK as an outlaw group and said 'I wish we had a button we could press to eliminate them.' The same official reiterated that the US is sincere in its stance against the PKK, and reminded us that the US has been the only country to help Turkey in its fight against the PKK. When we mentioned the PKK camps in the Kandil mountains and PKK offices in Kirkuk, and asked how the Americans would feel if the flag of a terrorist organization like Al-Qaida was flying in Turkey, the official's reply was rather interesting. The official pointed out that 'the PKK flag never flies anywhere in the US.' The official added that Barzani and Talabani would take necessary actions against the PKK in time. When we screamed that Turkey has no patience to wait any longer, the US official said that the US is taking necessary measures on the issue, and assured that certain things would change in the region soon. Based on these statements, we can surmise that the US has given us some guarantees on the PKK. Now we are waiting to see what steps the US is going to take. It is not good enough to say that 'Turkey is very important and valuable for us.' Turkey needs to see action from the US. The US is undergoing a 'test of sincerity' in the eyes of the Turkish public on the issue of the PKK and Northern Iraq."

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